



Charles County Government

CHARLES COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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Amanda M. Stewart, M.Ed.

Mark Belton
County Administrator

December 20, 2019

Mr. P. Scott White
Chairman of the Board
Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative
P.O. Box 1937
Hughesville, MD 20637-1937

Subject: Exploring opportunities for Charles County to support SMECO in expanding broadband service

Dear Mr. White:

We understand that this is a critical, important business decision that SMECO is making, and we appreciate the unique circumstances that SMECO is in as a trusted community partner.

Ensuring that all Charles County residents have access to broadband is a top priority for the County government. We believe that universal broadband is critical to the County's priorities in terms of economic development, educational attainment, civic engagement, public safety, and quality of life.

As you know, the County's Rural Broadband Task Force—which counts SMECO as an engaged member—has been actively working to address broadband gaps in the County through a variety of means.

Importantly, our strategic planning process has also identified time-critical opportunities for state and federal funding that might enable SMECO to offset a significant portion of its capital costs for expanding broadband infrastructure to reach those unserved members of the community.

We understand that SMECO is in the process of selecting a new CEO—and that you may want to wait for that leader to engage on these opportunities. However, given the grant application deadlines, we are writing to ask that the Board engage with the County on this issue now. We seek to understand SMECO's priorities, so that we can incorporate SMECO's interests among our strategic options.

We would like to propose a meeting between our Rural Broadband Task Force and SMECO staff in early January to discuss the next steps going forward. We are also happy to engage with the SMECO Board of Directors at a retreat in early spring to discuss opportunities to collaborate.

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The County is interested in partnering with SMECO for the benefit of Charles County residents. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues with you and your Board colleagues in the near future.

Sincerely,

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
CHARLES COUNTY, MARYLAND

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Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., *President*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Bobby Rucci'.

Bobby Rucci, *Vice President*
District 4

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Amanda M. Stewart'.

Amanda M. Stewart, M.Ed.
District 3

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Thomasina O. Coates'.

Thomasina O. Coates, M.S.
District 2